



**City Council
Office**

435 Ryman
Missoula, MT 59802
Phone: 406-327-8911
Fax: 406-327-2137

E-mail: dstrohmaier@mc.missoula.mt.us
Web: www.ci.missoula.mt.us/citycouncil/

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Senate Natural Resources Committee
Montana Legislature

Dear Chairman Gebhardt and committee members:

I write to you today in support of SB131, which requires the Department of Natural Resources to delineate the wildland-urban interface in counties throughout Montana. Unfortunately, I am unable to attend today's committee meeting on the bill.

As chair of the Missoula City Council's Public Safety and Health Committee, I have serious concerns about the threat of wildland fire to both existing and future development on the periphery of our community within the so-called wildland-urban interface. Missoula is not unique in this regard, as communities throughout the northern Rockies and Intermountain West grapple with increasing development in fire-prone landscapes.

Currently, Missoula is in the midst of overhauling its zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations. I had hoped to address wildland-urban interface fire issues as part of this process, but was surprised to learn that our city, and Missoula County, is sorely lacking in reliable data and detailed maps that delineate the wildland-urban interface. Consequently, I was delighted to see Senator Williams's bill, and the opportunity that it presents for communities throughout Montana to take a proactive approach to growth, development, and public safety in the wildland-urban interface.

Thanks for considering my comments, and I'd be happy to answer any additional questions that committee members might have.

Sincerely,

Dave Strohmaier
Alderman
Missoula City Council, Ward 1